

A Century of Army Historical Work



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ALTHOUGH the historical organization and work of the U.S. Army today are largely an outgrowth of World War II, the beginnings go back more than a century. On 26 January 1864, Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts introduced a resolution in Congress "to provide for the printing of the official reports of the armies of the United States." The ultimate result was the 128 volumes of *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*; the first volume appeared in 1878 and the last in 1901. This documentary history, so useful to Civil War scholars today, was published under War Department auspices at a cost calculated to be \$3,158,514.67. But it was not the first of the department's historical publications. Between 1870 and 1889 The Surgeon General had published six oversize volumes, *The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion*, providing a wealth of medical and historical data for later generations and establishing a tradition the Medical Department was to follow in future wars.

In its later stages, the project of editing and publishing the Civil War records fell under the aegis of The Adjutant General, whose office also undertook to collect and publish records of the American Revolution. This latter effort lapsed without productive issue in 1915 when appropriated funds ran out. The beginnings of Army historical work of a more sophisticated character grew out of establishment of the General Staff Corps in 1903; buried in the order establishing it was a clause charging the corps with "the preparation of . . . technical histories of military operations of the United States" (General Order 120, War Department, 14 August 1903). No general-staff historical section like that existing in most European countries at the time emerged

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until March 1918, however, when in the midst of World War I a Historical Branch was organized in the War Plans Division. Historical offices were also established in General Pershing's headquarters and in the Services of Supply in France. The impulse behind this historical activity was initially the belief that the War Department should prepare a multivolume history of American participation in the war that, as Chief of Staff Tasker H. Bliss put it, "would record the things that were well done, for future imitation [and] . . . the errors as shown by experience, for future avoidance."¹

These hopes were not realized. Rapid and almost complete demobilization in the summer of 1919 forced reduction in Army headquarters offices, including the Historical Branch; and most of the civilian professional historians who had joined it, in and out of uniform, were lost. Then Secretary of War Newton D. Baker decided it would be wrong to try to produce a scholarly narrative history. Such a history, wrote Baker, "would be incomplete unless it undertook to discuss economic, political, and diplomatic questions, and the discussions of such questions by military men would be controversial . . . and indiscreet for treatment by the War Department." Thus, he ruled, "the work of the Historical Section should . . . be limited to the collection, indexing, and preservation of records and the preparation of such monographs as are purely military in character."²

This dictum was to govern and restrict the scope of Army historical activity in the interwar years, with the result that there was no comprehensive organized body of materials available on experience in World War I for use by American planners at the outbreak of World War II except in one specialized area. Following the precedent established after the Civil War, The Surgeon General sponsored the preparation within his department of a clinical and administrative history of medical experience in World War I, published during the 1920s.³

A central Army historical section did survive, and in 1921 it was attached to the Army War College. There a reduced staff collected World War I records for eventual publication, prepared and published a complete Army order of battle for World War I,⁴ provided extensive reference services to other elements of the

1. Memo, CofS for SW, 2 Jan 18, in CMH GRB files 314.7 HS WPD (1914-19).

2. Memo. SW Baker for CofS, 4 Aug 19. Copy in CMH Gen Ref Files—Thomas File 3336-H.

3. *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War*, 15 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921-29).

4. *Order of Battle of United States Land Forces in the World War (1917-1919)*, 3 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931-49).

Army and to the public, and in 1924 acquired the function of determining the official lineages and battle honors of Army units. For a decade after the war a writing program consisting of monographs on "purely military" subjects persisted, but it finally collapsed in 1929 in the face of opposition by The Adjutant General to members of the Army writing any sort of history on World War I.

The work of the Historical Section nonetheless did result in some publications. As chief of staff, General Pershing had established a policy that encouraged writing military history for outside publication, and some of the outstanding soldier-historians who served in this office between the wars—notably Oliver L. Spaulding, John W. Wright, and Hoffman Nickerson—produced some excellent scholarly studies on the more remote past. And between 1927 and 1933 a small Battlefields Sub-Section conducted numerous studies of American battlefields, four of which (on battles of the American Revolution) were published as congressional documents. But this function of studying battlefields for purposes of historical preservation was transferred to the National Park Service in 1933.

With the outbreak of World War II, the Army War College Historical Section became heavily engaged in preparing historical background studies to support current general staff work. But it continued to devote its main effort to editing World War I records and performing general reference work including keeping a World War II chronology. When the World War I documents were finally published in 1948,⁵ they were restricted to the American Expeditionary Forces (no War Department documents) and represented a far less ambitious venture than did the *Official Records of the Rebellion*. By that time the War College Historical Section had been absorbed by a new historical office specifically designed to write a multivolume history of the Army's role in World War II comparable in concept to that originally contemplated for World War I.

The Historical Program During World War II

The strongest impetus for the World War II historical program came from President Roosevelt, who on 4 March 1942 directed all executive departments and agencies to arrange for preserving records and for relating their administrative experience during

5. *The United States Army in the World War, 1917-1919*, 17 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1948).

the war.⁶ A second impulse came from within the Army when the staff recognized the need for recording operational as well as administrative experience. The result was that in the technical services, the major zone of interior commands, and overseas theaters historical sections were established to collect materials and write preliminary monographs on the activities of their particular staff or command agencies. And in August 1943 the War Department established a new historical branch in the Military Intelligence Division (G-2) of the General Staff to give direction and purpose to the Army's World War II historical effort.

The decision to establish a new central historical office stemmed from the conviction of both civilian and military leaders that the Army should eventually prepare a comprehensive narrative history of its experience in the war and from a belief that the existing War College Historical Section was not equipped for such a task. Rejecting the position of Newton D. Baker after World War I, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy was the moving force behind the decision to create the new section; and Lt. Col. John M. Kemper, a thirty-year-old West Point graduate with a master's degree in history, became its principal organizer and first head. At Kemper's suggestion, McCloy appointed a planning committee of three civilian and three military members to assist G-2 in forming the new organization. The committee was headed by James Phinney Baxter, president of Williams College, then serving as deputy director of the Office of Strategic Services, and its other members were eminent historians.

As a result of the committee's work, the Historical Branch, G-2, became responsible for all Army historical work on World War II, including determining the functions of the War College Historical Section and final approval and editing of all historical manuscripts prepared for publication by Army agencies. While headed by a military chief, the professional supervision of the historical work was assigned to a civilian chief historian, a post assumed by Dr. Walter Livingston Wright, former president of Roberts College. The planning committee was continued as a War Department Historical Advisory Committee.

The first assignment for the Historical Branch was a series of studies on specific military operations; General Marshall wanted them for circulation within the Army and particularly

6. Ltr, President Roosevelt to Hon Harold D. Smith, Director, Bureau of the Budget, 4 Mar 42, copy in CMH—HRC 228.03 OCMH Hist Prog—Presidential Directives.

for distribution to soldiers who had been wounded in the actions described. This assignment was one of the factors producing closer links between the Historical Branch and the overseas theaters. Historical teams went overseas to do most of the preliminary research and writing; they returned their drafts to Washington for editing and publication (see Chapter 13). Between 1943 and 1947 the branch published fourteen studies in the *Armed Forces in Action* series. In addition to these publications, the wartime historical work resulted in a large collection of unpublished manuscripts that came to rest in the Historical Branch as the wartime commands, both at home and overseas, were dissolved or drastically reduced in the great postwar demobilization.

The U.S. Army in World War II Series

The Historical Branch began to plan a comprehensive history of the Army's role in World War II while still a part of G-2. But since its officers and historians realized that there was no real affinity between intelligence and history functions, they and the advisory committee recommended and Assistant Secretary McCloy backed a reorganization of November 1945: The branch became the Historical Division, War Department Special Staff, with Maj. Gen. Edwin F. Harding at its head; the following year it absorbed the staff and functions of the Army War College Historical Section. Only three months after establishment of the Historical Division, the Chief of Staff and Secretary of War approved its plan for a narrative history of a hundred or more volumes in a series to be designated *The U.S. Army in World War II*.

The volumes were to be assigned to the War Department, the major wartime zone of interior commands (Army Air Forces, Army Ground Forces, and Army Service Forces), the technical services, and the overseas theaters. Special studies would examine other subjects. The plan underwent many changes in numbers and titles of volumes in the years following, but the basic divisions remained intact. With the separation of the Air Force from the Army in 1947, however, the seven-volume *U.S. Army Air Forces in World War II* became an independent series.

Preparation of the official Army series absorbed almost all the energies of the new Historical Division for some years after its foundation. Early in 1946 Dr. Kent Roberts Greenfield, former head of the history department at Johns Hopkins University and wartime chief of the Historical Section at Army Ground Forces,

succeeded Dr. Wright as chief historian and general editor of the series. He served in that post until 1958 and saw much of the series through to completion. A series of able general officers who served as military heads of the organization and colonels who manned its executive levels provided the military leadership in what Dr. Greenfield described as "a happy marriage of the military and historical professions." A second feature of the happy marriage was the advisory committee, reconstituted in 1947 with representatives from the higher Army schools and more civilian academic members. By and large, the Historical Division recruited the civilian professional staff for the World War II series from historians who had served in uniform in the various wartime historical sections at home and abroad.

It was also established that the volumes should be accurate and objective, conforming to the best traditions of historical scholarship, and that authors should have access to all pertinent Army records. "The history of the Army in World War II now in preparation," directed General Eisenhower in 1947, "must, without reservation, tell the complete story of the Army's participation, fully documented with references to the records used." He charged all members of the Army staff with facilitating historians' access to the necessary records and stressed that the directive was "to be interpreted in the most liberal sense without reservations as to whether or not the evidence of history places the Army in a favorable light."⁷

In the combat volumes historians could include the enemy side of the story. Unconditional surrender meant the wholesale capture of enemy records and testimony from many of the most important enemy officers. Captured German and Japanese military records were brought to Washington. Under an interrogation and writing program in the European theater, German officers produced some 2,500 manuscripts. And a large group of Japanese Army and Navy officers prepared a comprehensive series of monographs on Japanese plans and operations, about 180 of which were translated and distributed for Army use. Within the Historical Division a foreign studies section took shape to prepare the enemy side of the story for use by authors of the U.S. Army in World War II series.

The anticipation had been that much of the research and

7. Memo, Gen D. D. Eisenhower for Dirs of Army Gen Stf Divs. Chfs of Army Spec Stf Divs, 20 Nov 47. sub: Policy Concerning Release of Info fr Hist Docs of the Army—w/Spec Ref to the Events of WW II. CMH GRB Files—HRC 228.03 Hist Prog—Pres Directives.

writing for the series would be done in the commands and technical services, with the final editing and publication handled by the Historical Division. Indeed, the series was launched in 1946-47 with the publication of two Army Ground Forces volumes that were basically products of wartime monograph work in that command. Except for the Army Air Forces, however, most of the other commands disappeared so rapidly that the work devolved on the Historical Division. Only the seven technical services remained responsible for preparing their own volumes (each was eventually assigned three or four). And the Historical Section of the Medical Corps, the largest of all the technical service historical organizations, soon had plans to publish independently its own multivolume series of clinical histories in addition to the administrative volumes it proposed to contribute to *The U.S. Army in World War II*. Apart from these clinical volumes, the Historical Division retained responsibility for review, editing, and publication of the technical service histories, and its chief was given supervisory authority over all technical service historical activity.

In mid-1947, with the series hardly under way, reduced appropriations threatened the staffs of both the Historical Division and the historical units of the technical services. Largely as a result of the urging of Col. Allen F. Clark, then executive of the Historical Division, the Secretary of War created a War Department Historical Fund—\$4 million in nonappropriated funds, part of the undistributed post exchange profits of World War II—to finance the writing and publication of the World War II series. It was estimated that the series could be completed in five years, and most of the people working on it were assured employment for that length of time. Although most of the technical services managed to continue their work without reliance on the fund, the Historical Division had to take over the Transportation Corps and Signal Corps programs, and for a time it also carried the historian of the Ordnance Corps on its fund roster.

The assumption by the Historical Division of most of the responsibility for writing as well as editing and publishing the series produced a new and different requirement for editors. Initially historians had been employed as editors in the belief that much of the writing would be done in other agencies. With the system changed, historians editing (and criticizing) the work of other historians led to frequent clashes. The solution was to create a separate professional editorial staff, largely recruited from publishing companies.

Large though it seemed at the time, the War Department Historical Fund financed only part of the World War II histories. The series took much longer to prepare and publish than was originally forecast. The fund was seriously depleted by 1954, while work on the series continued to absorb an important, though diminishing, share of the Army's historical effort into the 1970s. By 1977 some seventy-three volumes of the seventy-nine finally scheduled had been published and the rest were approaching completion. The U.S. Army in World War II series stands today as the greatest single endeavor in Army historical work.

Other Historical Activities

In 1950 the Historical Division, War Department Special Staff, was redesignated the Office, Chief of Military History, and was known as OCMH for the next two dozen years. In January 1956 OCMH was placed under the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, for administration and general policy supervision. Neither of the changes had any fundamental effect on the work of the agency. But it did receive other tasks besides the World War II histories as that war receded into the background.

In 1946 the Historical Division had inherited general reference, staff support, and lineages and honors functions from the old War College section. In 1949 it also became responsible for historical properties, mainly general administration of a collection of American soldier art of World War II and captured German and Japanese paintings; this responsibility later broadened to include some supervision of Army museums and their collections. (See chapters 14 and 15.) In 1951 OCMH assumed the task of compiling and publishing a series on the background and battle honors of individual units. The first volume, on infantry regiments and battalions, appeared in 1953.⁸ The project was later enlarged and redesignated the Army Lineage Series, a major activity of OCMH (see Chapter 16).

In 1949, to meet a staff need, an Applied Studies Division was established to prepare and coordinate Army historical studies apart from the main World War II series. Under the direction of retired Brig. Gen. Paul M. Robinette, this division absorbed the foreign studies activities and produced special monographs on German operations, eventually published in some twenty

8. *Army Lineage Book*, vol. II: *Infantry* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953).

Department of the Army pamphlets. The division wrote other historical studies (also published as pamphlets) covering mobilization, demobilization, replacements, and utilization of prisoners of war in the United States, as well a *Guide to the Writing of American Military History*. As an outgrowth of the studies of German Army operations, OCMH planned seven volumes on the German campaign in Russia, to be published in a format similar to the U.S. Army in World War II series.

Despite the general liquidation of command and staff historical activities outside Washington after World War II, Army historical sections did remain in the two major overseas theaters—Europe and the Far East—and in the Army Ground Forces command. The two overseas sections worked on the foreign studies, on monographs and annual reports on the occupation of Germany and Japan, and, in the case of General MacArthur's command, on a separate history of operations in the Southwest Pacific during World War II. The ground forces historians also produced monographs just after the war, but by 1950 that command had given way to a new agency, Army Field Forces, with a one-man historical staff. Although the Chief of Military History was charged with coordinating and supervising historical activities of all Army units, major commands, and theaters, this supervision was lightly exercised and hardly existed at all in the Far East.

The Korean War and After

While the main emphasis in OCMH continued to be on the uncompleted World War II histories, the Korean War required a program similar to that of World War II for current coverage. As was the case earlier, impetus for preparing Korean War histories came from the president and from within the military establishment. In a directive reminiscent of President Roosevelt's in World War II, President Truman ordered departments and agencies to prepare administrative histories of their activities "in the present emergency."⁹ And again the Army felt the need for operational history. The Army's responsibility actually extended beyond its own activities; the Joint Chiefs of Staff had ordered it to prepare a history of the joint command in the Far East during the Korean War.

9. Ltr. President Harry S. Truman to Director of the Budget, 29 Jan 51, copy in CMH—HRC 228.03 Hist. Prog.—Pres Directives.

The Army sent military historical teams to the theater, and material was collected and monographs written at both Eighth Army and Far East Command levels (see Chapter 13). OCMH prepared two narrative-pictorial histories of the war and two studies of small unit actions in combat and combat support and planned a new nine-volume series, similar to that of World War II, tentatively entitled *The U.S. Army in the Conflict With the Communist Powers*. Five volumes in this series were to be devoted to the Korean War itself, four more to the cold war in general. The latter four volumes were considered to be, fundamentally, a response to President Truman's directive. Each of the technical services also planned a volume covering its cold war activities.

Most of the Army's regular staff historians continued their work on World War II. To cover the Korean War, reserve officers with historical training were called to active duty and other officers learned by doing. Most returned to civilian jobs or other military duties once the war was over, but a few joined OCMH, first as officers and some later as civilians.

The new series was added to the Army's historical program at a time of decreasing personnel and increasing demands. With the War Department Historical Fund nearing exhaustion, OCMH fell from a peak of 251 officers and civilians in mid-1951 to 122 in mid-1954. After President Eisenhower endorsed the Army's historical work in 1954, appropriated funds were made available to transfer many, but not all, fund employees to the civil service. But the 1950s was a time of belt tightening throughout the Army, and the attrition in OCMH continued; by mid-1961 there were only seventy-seven employees. The command historical sections in both Europe and the Pacific were also reduced. Only the technical service sections were able, for the most part, to hold their own.

Meanwhile, new tasks proliferated. The Korean War underlined the need for continuously collecting sources and recording contemporary Army history in a crisis that threatened to go on indefinitely. The experience of World War II and Korea had proved the value of collecting documents, gathering oral testimony, and writing preliminary accounts while events were still vivid in the memories of participants. As the cold war went on, coverage of current Army history seemed in order as a continuing function, despite meager resources. OCMH had started a historical reporting system during the Korean War; Army staff sections in Washington and Army field forces were

required to produce annual summaries of major events and problems. This program continued in the years following and became the major vehicle for covering the current history of Department of the Army headquarters staff sections, including the technical services, and of the Continental Army Command created in 1956. The two major overseas commands, in Europe and the Pacific, submitted annual reports under a different system. Some of the technical services, as well as the European command, also conducted monograph programs on current topics. The current history program grew haphazardly with little supervision and limited monitoring by OCMH; current history work in that office generally concentrated on the Korean War.

The Army staff and schools also increased their demands on OCMH and other historical offices for information and studies prepared on short notice—for what may loosely be termed staff support. The loss of the Applied Studies Division in the general cutback threw much of this burden on authors responsible for volumes on World War II and Korea. The reorganization of Army combat units under the Combat Arms Regimental System placed a heavy additional load on those working on lineages and honors volumes; historical properties work created even greater demands as responsibilities broadened to include Army museums; and queries from both officials and the public absorbed the best efforts of a small General Reference Section. A project of particular note assigned to OCMH in 1955 was the preparation and periodic revision of an American military history text to be used in the senior ROTC course. The first text, ROTCM 145-20, *American Military History 1607-1955*, a cooperative endeavor that occupied the best talent in OCMH for some months, was published in 1956, with a revision in 1959.

All of these demands on a shrinking staff played an important part in delaying completion of volumes in the various OCMH series. A committee reevaluated and reduced publications requirements in 1960. A new program set the limits of the U.S. Army in World War II series at seventy-nine volumes, retained a five-volume U.S. Army in the Korean War series, eliminated the other volumes in the proposed U.S. Army in Conflict With the Communist Powers series entirely, and cut the proposed seven volumes on the German campaign in Russia to three. An Army Historical Series was created to accommodate volumes that might be produced outside the World War II and Korean War series, including the foreign studies volumes.

The Reorganization of 1962-63

In a fundamental reorganization of 1962-63, the headquarters of five of the seven technical services were abolished, an Army Materiel Command created to absorb most of their functions, and the responsibilities of the Continental Army Command redefined and divided with a new Combat Developments Command. Accompanying the larger reorganization, and partly in response to it, the Army's historical program was reorganized and revitalized. On the basis of a detailed review of the existing system and structure, the Chief of Staff directed the Chief of Military History to coordinate and supervise the whole Army historical effort. A new Army regulation on historical activities (AR 870-5) brought together a host of separate directives, standardized the system for preparing and using military history throughout the Army, and established programs for both long-range and annual historical work. Under the new regulation, all major commands were to prepare annual historical reports and undertake historical studies on current activities. And the regulation established much closer control by the Chief of Military History over historical properties held throughout the Army. Active OCMH supervision over Army museums dates from 1962.

OCMH took on most of the book writing functions and a few of the historians of the five discontinued technical service headquarters; only the Surgeon General and the Chief of Engineers kept separate historical offices, and one of the remaining engineer volumes on World War II was transferred to OCMH. Many of the technical service historians and current history functions went to the Army Materiel Command and its subordinate components. The new Combat Developments Command acquired a historical staff, and the section at Continental Army Command was considerably strengthened. New Army history offices were established in the Army Air Defense Command, in U.S. Army, Alaska, headquarters; and in what became the Southern Command in Panama. The result of these redistributions was a much better balanced historical coverage of the Army and a new emphasis on current historical work.

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s OCMH continued to give first priority to preparing books for publication, including the World War II, Korean War, and Army Historical series. By 1976, three of the proposed five Korea volumes had appeared and one more was well on the way. A revised and much improved ROTC text, *American Military History*, edited by Maurice

Matloff, was published in the Army Historical series in 1969, with a partial revision in 1973. Other books in this series covered Army logistics from the Revolution through the Korean War, the German-Russian war, and the American military occupation of Germany. OCMH also assumed responsibility for a pioneer volume in a proposed Defense Studies series, a work on integration in all the armed services. And an examination of Army organization from the founding of the General Staff in 1903 to the reorganization of 1963 inaugurated a new Special Studies series, designed to accommodate more detailed, monographic works.

Both in OCMH and throughout the Army, nevertheless, historians devoted much more time to recent events and to staff support. OCMH established its own current monograph program, and its historians prepared studies of the Army's role in such events as the Berlin crisis of 1961-62, the Cuban missile crisis, and the civil disturbance at Oxford, Mississippi, in 1963. Demands for special work on short notice reached new heights as the Army staff turned to OCMH for background studies on matters of current interest, ranging from the Army's experience with the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s to deployment procedures in World War II and Korea.

As an added aspect of current history work, in 1963 OCMH also began preparing the Secretary of the Army's annual report. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun had signed the first one in 1822. Since 1949, however, it had formed part of the Secretary of Defense's annual report. Although this practice was discontinued in 1972, the document had been a valuable source of basic, unclassified information, and the Army decided to continue with a somewhat similar compilation, the annual *Department of the Army Historical Summary*.

Later Changes, MHI and CMH

Despite some changes, the basic lines established in 1962-63 have governed Army historical activities since that time. On 12 June 1967 the U.S. Army Military History Research Collection was established at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, as part of the Army War College. In 1970 it became a Class II installation under OCMH, and in 1977 the name was changed to the U.S. Army Military History Institute (MHI). This was something new in the Army historical establishment, an institution devoted to preserving materials related to the military history of the

United States and making them available to both military and civilian researchers (see Chapter 12).

Then in 1973, in another general reorganization, the Office, Chief of Military History, was converted from a special staff agency into a field operating agency under the new name of the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH). Its commander retained the title of Chief of Military History, however, and as such continued to exercise staff responsibilities for military history. The research collection became an integral part of the new center though still located at the Army War College. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations retained staff supervision over the center, and its mission and functions remained the same. The main change was that CMH acquired control over its own budget.

In a broader reorganization of the Army in 1973-74, Continental Army Command and Combat Developments Command were abolished and replaced by a Training and Doctrine Command and Forces Command, with a realignment of functions. A Health Services Command, which absorbed some of the operating functions of the Surgeon General's office, was created at the same time. Historical staffs and responsibilities were realigned to go along with these new commands. Further reorganizations in 1974 abolished Army component commands in the Pacific, Alaska, and the Caribbean, and the Army Air Defense Command in the United States. The jurisdiction of Forces Command was extended into some of these areas; but in the Pacific, for instance, field historical coverage devolved on such formerly subordinate organizations as the Eighth Army in Korea and U.S. Army, Japan. All the major commands, including the Health Services Command, nevertheless, established historical sections that, at the very least, produced annual historical reviews. The Corps of Engineers also retained a separate historical section devoted mainly to the corps' civil projects, while coverage of its military activities was transferred to the Center of Military History. Then in mid-1975 the last of the old technical service historical offices, the one with the longest tradition, lost its independence when the Medical Department Historical Unit was transferred from the Surgeon General to the Center of Military History and became the Medical History Division of that agency.

The Program for the War in Vietnam

Writing on Vietnam began in OCMH in 1962, as part of the

current history program, with a special study reviewing the Army's activities in that area since 1954. When the Office, Secretary of Defense, called for a more detailed account by each service and by the Joint Chiefs of Staff of their activities in connection with Vietnam, OCMH prepared a long classified monograph on the Army's involvement through the end of 1963. Later OCMH extended this monograph to record events through June 1965, and the historical office of U.S. Army, Pacific, increased in size for this specific purpose, did likewise. In Saigon a Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), historical office was set up in 1964 to cover joint military activities in the area.

In July 1965 President Johnson announced plans for deploying large numbers of troops to Vietnam and for expanding the Army; at the same time General William C. Westmoreland, MACV commander, announced the establishment of a separate U.S. Army, Vietnam, headquarters. Army historical activity soon quickened as Chief of Staff General Harold K. Johnson directed that the war receive coverage of the same quality as World War II. In OCMH a special historical staff devoted to the war in Vietnam took shape. As part of an Army-wide monograph program, each of the major commands in the United States was required to record its role in the Vietnam buildup. In Vietnam the Army command established a historical office, and Washington sent military history detachments to serve Army divisions and brigades in the field (see Chapter 13).

The purpose of these efforts was twofold: first, to meet staff and field requirements for historical information and support; second, to ensure the preservation of records needed to prepare a definitive narrative history of the war comparable to the World War II series. Plans for such a history had emerged by 1976 and called for twenty-one volumes dealing with the background of involvement; Department of the Army policy, planning, and support; land combat in the theater; various aspects of logistical support; and the problems of press coverage and soldier morale, matters of great importance in the Vietnam War. The Center of Military History collaborated with the Adjutant General's Office and the National Archives in expediting the retirement of records from Vietnam to depositories in the Washington area where they would be available to historians.

In 1970, OCMH published a slim paperback volume, *Seven Firefights in Vietnam*, reminiscent in many ways of the World War II Armed Forces in Action series. That same year General Westmoreland, as Army Chief of Staff, established a Vietnam

monograph series on various specialized topics, to be written by key Army leaders who were specialists in the areas covered. The first to appear was *Communications-Electronics, 1962-1970*, by Maj. Gen. Thomas M. Rienzi; eighteen more had followed by the end of 1976 with two still in progress. The job of the Center of Military History in preparing the monographs was to assist the authors in planning and research, to make the necessary maps, and to edit the manuscripts for publication. In this sense the monographs were not products of the center but firsthand accounts to be used in writing definitive works for the 21-volume U.S. Army in Vietnam series.

Army History Today

Army history has come far in the past century, and is now a solidly based function supported by Army leaders. The first century of Army historical work was devoted mainly to collecting, editing, and publishing basic records; narrative histories came into their own during and after World War II and have remained the principal form of Army history, not merely as published books but also as classified monographs and special studies prepared on demand to meet specific needs. All the historical services functions—general reference, lineages and honors, collecting and organizing historical materials, and oral history—have also continued to grow.

Army Regulation 10-48, 1 September 1974, gives the mission of the Center of Military History: to

formulate and execute the Army Historical Program; coordinate and supervise Army historical matters including historical properties; prepare and publish histories required by the Army; formulate the historical background and precedents required for the development of military plans, policies, doctrine, and techniques; supervise the Army Museum system; maintain a repository for the collection and preservation of historical documents relating to the United States Army; and provide historical material and assistance to, and maintain liaison with, public and private agencies and individuals and stimulate interest and study in the field of military history.

Since the addition of the Medical History Division to the center, responsibilities also include preparing and publishing medical history and collecting and maintaining medical history materials.

The commanding general of the center bears the title Chief of Military History and as such represents the entire Army on historical matters with responsibility for advising the Chief of

Staff, the Secretary of the Army, and all components of the Army. The center conducts the historical program under the provisions of Army Regulation 870-5 (1977) that sets forth the responsibilities of all elements of the Army in its fulfillment. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans exercises general staff supervision over the center. The various parts of the Army historical program—the several series, the monographs, the annual reporting system, the work of the Military History Institute, medical history, special studies, organizational history, lineages and honors, general reference service, historical properties, and Army art—are detailed in a long-range historical plan (a ten-year projection) and in an annual historical program which sets goals for each fiscal year.

Within the center, following the system established after World War II, the Chief of Military History is a general officer. He is advised on professional and technical aspects of military history by a Chief Historian, a civilian responsible for the professional quality of Army history. A Department of the Army Historical Advisory Committee composed of four military representatives of the Army school system, representatives of The Surgeon General's Office and The Adjutant General, the Deputy Archivist of the United States, and seven civilian historians, meets annually and advises the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff, and the Chief of Military History on the Army's historical program.

A Management Support Division provides administrative services within the center. The center's principal functions are carried out by four other elements, Histories, Historical Services, the Military History Institute (research collection), and the Medical History Division.

The Histories Division produces the most widely read and used products of the Army historical program, the major narrative histories in the various series. The division also handles historical reports and demand projects requested by the Army secretariat and staff and other sources.

The Historical Services Division establishes the official lineages and honors of units, compiles the volumes in the Army Lineage series, provides general reference service, works on some of the demand projects, and is responsible for historical properties, including Army museums, and the Army art program.

The Medical History Division prepares and publishes volumes, monographs, and special studies on Army medical services. Much of the work of the division is in clinical histories;

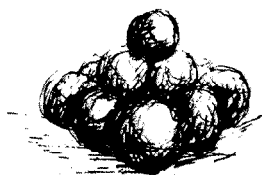
some thirty-three covering World War II have been published. Written by physicians who are prominent specialists, these clinical histories are usually collections of articles, similar to those published in medical journals, on one subject. Essentially the job of the Medical History Division is to assist the physicians in their research and writing and to assemble and edit the final product. In addition to the clinical books, the division prepares administrative histories written by professional historians rather than medical doctors. For example the Medical Department was allotted four volumes in the World War II series, two of which have been published.

The fourth part of the center, the U.S. Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, is treated in some detail in Chapter 12 of this Guide.

The basic Army regulation on military history and the annual programs provide for historical activities of departmental staff agencies and Army commands worldwide. Army staff agencies send unclassified material to the Center of Military History for the annual *Department of the Army Historical Summary* and compile classified annual historical reviews for their own use and for preparation of later histories. Major commands and some subordinate commands also prepare annual historical reviews and monographs on selected current topics. The Army encourages its leaders, commissioned and noncommissioned, to make full use of military history. Individual units preserve and use their own history to promote pride and self-esteem, and many Army installations have museums.

The Army's historical program is comprehensive with organizational threads extending from the secretariat through the departmental staff and Center of Military History to stateside and overseas commands, agencies, installations, and units. The program is designed to preserve and use the military record for the many purposes that history serves.

The U.S. Army Military History Institute



Col. James B. Agnew and
B. Franklin Cooling

LOCATED at the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, the U.S. Army Military History Institute (formerly the U.S. Army Military History Research Collection—redesignated 1 April 1977) is a complex of library and reference facilities, special collections, and archives, all of which deal in the main with American and, to a lesser extent, foreign military history. Since its inception in 1967, the institute has collected, preserved, and made available for use documents and materials pertinent to the history of the U.S. Army. Because of the many domestic and foreign influences that have shaped that history, the staff of the institute has interpreted its mission broadly. Substantial holdings relate to the U.S. Navy and Air Force, the reserve components, foreign military forces, and wars in which the United States was not involved. Many of the holdings pre-date any American army and provide sources on the evolution of the military art.

The institute began almost by accident. In 1966 its first director, Col. George S. Pappas, then a member of the Army War College staff and faculty, was directed to update the history of that institution. While searching for source material, Pappas came across some very old books on military history in the War College library in Upton Hall, the administrative and academic center for the college. Colonel Pappas asked the commandant, Maj. Gen. Eugene Salet, for space to secure and preserve the books in Upton Hall when the War College library moved into new quarters in Root Hall. He also requested authority to seek other rare books to add to the collection; the whole would become

Colonel Agnew (USA, Ret., M.P.A., Princeton), Director of the U.S. Army Military History Institute in 1974-77, also served as Assistant Professor of History at the U.S. Military Academy and wrote *The Egg-Nog Riot: Christmas Mutiny at West Point*. Dr. Cooling (Ph.D., Pennsylvania) is Assistant Director for Historical Services at the Military History Institute. His numerous publications in military and naval history include a biography of Benjamin Franklin Tracy and *Symbol, Sword, and Shield: Defending Washington During the Civil War*.

part of the War College library. General Salet agreed, provided the project would not conflict with the activities of the Army's Chief of Military History, at that time Brig. Gen. Hal C. Pattison. General Pattison endorsed the idea and suggested the addition of a much larger collection, 30,000 volumes on military history before World War II that had been culled from the National War College library by that institution's librarian, George Stansfield, with the help of Charles Romanus of Pattison's office, and placed in special storage. With this first donation, the idea of an extensive research collection took shape; space was provided in Upton Hall in the facilities vacated by the War College library, and in 1967 an Army regulation established the Military History Research Collection.

From these small beginnings, the institute's holdings have expanded to more than 350,000 bound volumes, and it has also collected over 8,000 boxes of diaries, manuscripts, letters, and other valuable personal references to the Army and its heritage. Museum collections of artifacts, accoutrements, and art work have also been acquired. The professional staff has expanded from three to thirty-three civilian and military librarians, historians, archivists, curators, and administrators.

Although the collection dates from September 1966, the first academic researcher did not arrive until July of the following year. Seeking information on the life of General George Crook, Professor James King of Wisconsin State University found Crook's diaries and other related papers in the archives. Since then scholars such as Martin Blumenson, Forrest Pogue, Russell Weigley, Theodore Ropp, Charles Burdick, and S. L. A. Marshall have used other original records. In addition, a growing number of undergraduate and graduate students as well as other interested persons, both military and civilian, have used the institute's resources. Funds permitting, MHI administers an advanced research program involving modest grants for research in the institute's holdings. And an intern program gives undergraduates from nearby colleges experience in archives and museum management, library science, and the preparation of bibliographies.

The expansion of services and acquisitions during the decade since the facility was established can be traced by some highlights. In June 1968 the collection instituted a survey of surviving Spanish-American War veterans which helped develop perhaps the best archival holdings extant on the personal experiences of soldiers in that war, the Philippine Insurrection, and the Boxer Rebellion. The survey added over

300 linear feet of documents to those archives. Four months later began a monthly evening lectures series, "Perspectives in Military History," which brought prominent historians to Carlisle Barracks. In August 1969 an additional 120,000 volumes were transferred to the collection from the National War College library. In 1970 the collection was designated an official repository for documents and materials on the Army's heritage, the Senior Officer Oral History Program was established, and the first in a continuing series of bibliographic aids, *The US Army and Domestic Disturbances*, was published. Recently the institute has sponsored military history courses for the War College and has appointed distinguished academicians to the Harold Keith Johnson Chair of Military History. New acquisitions have included the Civil War collection from the Massachusetts Commandery of the Loyal Legion of the United States, the Aztec Club files, the Tasker H. Bliss papers, and numerous donations from retired senior American officers.

A field element of the U.S. Army Center of Military History in Washington, the institute is officially associated as well with the Army War College, whose commandant is also designated Commanding General, U.S. Army Military History Institute. The institute thus benefits from close ties with the Army's official historical agency as well as its senior service college.

Services and Facilities

The civilian scholar, military officer, or history buff visiting Upton Hall will find a prodigious amount of material. An archivist, librarian, or member of the reference service will interview the scholar concerned with a specific topic and, if appropriate, provide a desk in the research area near the primary and secondary sources relating to that topic. An officer doing more general research for a staff paper, graduate thesis, or War College project may find the spacious reading room more agreeable. A reference assistant or librarian will bring any necessary materials. Either type of researcher may want to use some of the more than 55,000 pages of oral history transcripts collected since 1970 from such military figures as Matthew B. Ridgway, Maxwell D. Taylor, Harold K. Johnson, Ferdinand Chesarek, and Austin Betts.

If the casual visitor is a military buff or a tourist interested more in looking around than in research, he can go on a self-guided tour of the Omar N. Bradley Museum, the Hessian Powder Magazine, or the various temporary displays in the foyer

and corridors of Upton Hall. Collections of heraldic art, photographs, uniforms, and equipment may also interest him. He may even offer to donate personal items from family records.

The institute provides such services as holdings, staff, and time permit. For resident or visiting scholars this usually includes access to and assistance with the bound volumes, archival material, periodicals, and special collections. Persons unable to visit the institute may borrow books through interlibrary loan (unless the volumes are rare or in poor physical condition). The institute will also fill at cost modest orders for reproduced pages. The scholar writing for specific information receives a description of the holdings on the subject and suggestions on the location of other sources.

Each year the institute publishes two or three bibliographies pertaining to its special holdings. The Special Bibliographic series includes such titles as *The Army and Civil Disturbances*, *The Black Military Experience*, *Unit Histories*, *The Spanish War Era*, *The Mexican War*, *Archival Holdings* (two volumes), *The Era of the Civil War*, and *The Colonial and Revolutionary Period*. Future bibliographies will deal with the U.S. Army in the west and both world wars. These bibliographies are distributed to military officials and organizations and may be purchased from the Government Printing Office.

Among the notable holdings at the institute are the World War I and World War II Signal Corps photo collections; the Massachusetts Loyal Legion collection of Civil War photographs, including many unpublished portraits and views of Army life and historic sites; audio archives of lectures, martial music, and reminiscences of veterans; American and European recruiting, propaganda, and war-loan posters from the major wars of the twentieth century; and microfilm copies of a number of doctoral dissertations on military history. The institute carries on an active acquisitions program and also welcomes donations from all sources. Staff librarians periodically screen the holdings of other libraries throughout the Army for materials that would be of greater value at Carlisle Barracks.

A Sample of the Holdings

A sample of volumes and document collections in the Military History Institute will suggest the amount and variety of material that can be found there. In the general stacks may be found a superb basic collection of narratives, biographies, and special studies ranging from ancient Greece and Rome to the modern

nation-states of Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas. Among the collections on special periods are seven or eight thousand volumes on the American Civil War, including rare personal narratives and unit histories; and nearly ten thousand volumes, in five languages, on World War I, including the official histories of all major powers. War Department reports, technical and field manuals, general and special orders, bulletins, and studies are abundant, although not all Army publications are available. The well-known writings of strategists such as Saxe, Jomini, Clausewitz, Napoleon, DuPicq, Schlieffen, and Mahan are available in several languages.

Most volumes in the rare book room were originally in the old War Department library, started about 1840. Works such as original manuscripts of the Lewis and Clark expeditions, medieval treatises on artillery and siegecraft, early histories of the British Army, Wellington's dispatches, Continental drill manuals, a Revolutionary War orderly book, and numerous superbly bound early histories of the United States and leather bound illustrations of military uniforms and equipment—some 6,000 titles in all—are in this repository.

The archives contain such major collections as the papers of Matthew B. Ridgway, Lewis B. Hershey, Paul Carraway, and Harold K. Johnson; the Spanish-American War and World War I veterans survey holdings; an original War Department copy of Emory Upton's study on the military policy of the United States; and the curricular archives of the Army War College for 1907-60. Countless personal papers, diaries, and individual military records of Civil War soldiers have been added in recent years, as have thousands of pages of oral history transcripts from more than seventy retired American generals.

The periodical section contains over 30,000 bound publications, both domestic and foreign, most either military or technical. Ranging from older copies of civilian periodicals like the *Nation*, *Harper's*, and *Time* to recent unit newspapers from the Vietnam period, the holdings include the *Army and Navy Journal*, various journals of the branches and services of the U.S. Army, and foreign military publications such as *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militaerzeitung*, *Der Adler*, *Deutsche Wehr*, *La Guerre Mondiale*, *Journal des Sciences Militaires*, and the *Canadian Military Gazette*.

A separate room is devoted to unit histories (including many of the British and German armies), Department of the Army authority files, and unclassified documents from the Korean and Vietnam wars. The institute also has a biographical reference

room and collections of insignia, uniforms, weapons, and equipment.

An Institution in Transition

The worth of a research establishment such as the Military History Institute lies in its programs and services as well as its materials. The years 1966-74 were a period of organization and acquisition; those since of consolidation and expanded use. Accessions, while continuing, have decreased from the time when the staff worked to build basic holdings. The institute continues to acquire important new publications as well as those which are becoming rare, and individual archival contributions are always welcome; but a policy of keeping duplicates out of the stacks has minimized the search for wholesale additions.

The institute staff advertises its resources to attract users, military and civilian, institutional and private. A number come from the military educational system—the service school faculties and students. A semiannual newsletter, published bibliographies, special studies such as the anthology *Some New Dimensions in Military History* and the series *Vignettes in Military History*, command and staff visits, the oral history program, and word of mouth attract researchers to Upton Hall.

The institute attempts to impress upon military officers the value of accumulated knowledge of the past in solving the problems of the contemporary Army. The staff contributes to the War College through the expanded military history elective program and through advice, case studies, bibliographies, and instructional assistance. Future conferences and symposia at Carlisle Barracks, hosted by the Military History Institute, will involve military and civilian academicians exchanging views on the research, writing, and teaching of military history. Staff members do research, write, lecture, and attend conferences to stimulate interest in the institute. The visiting professorship provides a link between the Army War College and the nation's colleges and universities.

The future of the Military History Institute appears bright, although it is certainly not without its problems. Possible staff cutbacks could reduce services. Space, adequate in 1967, will be at a premium as new holdings and new programs threaten to outgrow Upton Hall. Plans are afoot for expansion, but declining military budgets may prevent new construction. The natural aging of books, manuscripts, and artifacts makes preservation a bigger job than in the formative years. Still, the periodic review

of programs and progress by an energetic and innovative professional staff promises to expand, not curtail, service to the military history community. The institute expects to maintain its position as a valuable repository for information on domestic and foreign military affairs of the past.

The Military History Detachment in the Field



Richard A. Hunt

RECOGNIZING the military value of history, the U.S. Army established a historical branch under G-2 of the War Department General Staff during World War II and made the new organization responsible for accumulating sources for an official history of the war. From then on, the Army dispatched historians in uniform to the field to preserve and supplement the historical record as it was created. The main instrument has been the military history detachment or historical team. Its mission is to ensure that primary historical documents generated in the field are collected and preserved for later writing of complete histories. This underlying mission has changed little from World War II through Korea to Vietnam, although its implementation and the configuration of the teams have varied from war to war.

Historical teams in each war have been made up of officers and enlisted men who handled historical and clerical duties, respectively. Typewriters and jeeps, standard items in World War II and Korea, were complemented in Vietnam by tape recorders. Military history detachments were either attached to subordinate units with command and control retained by the theater, army, or administrative commander, or assigned to subordinate units such as divisions with command and control of the detachments vested in those units. These arrangements have limited the Army's central historical office (variously the Historical Branch, the Office of the Chief of Military History, and the Center of Military History) to "technical" rather than command supervision of the detachments on historical matters. Providing a service neither used by nor primarily intended for the field units which support them but for a staff agency in Washington, the historical detachments can sometimes be caught between the conflicting needs of the ultimate users of the information they gather and the requirements of their immediate field commanders. In such cases, the latter have in the past taken precedence.

Dr. Hunt (Ph.D., Pennsylvania) of the Current History Branch, CMH, was a field historian in Vietnam. He is working on a history of the pacification program in that country.

Yet the separation of the staff agency and the field historian does not necessarily diminish the quality or objectivity of the detachment's historical work. While this arrangement reduces the control the Washington historical office exercises, it can allow field detachments freedom and flexibility. Having the advantage of guidance from Washington, and often being under the immediate direction of a staff officer with no vested interest in the collection and disposition of historical documents, the commander of a historical unit in the war zone retains in theory enough autonomy to pursue his assignment thoroughly and objectively.

World War II

The World War II field historical program began in the midst of that conflict.¹ The first teams trained by the Historical Branch were assigned to the headquarters of the North African Theater of Operations where they initially prepared pamphlets about earlier World War II engagements for the Armed Forces in Action series. Teams soon existed at almost all levels of command. Located in the European, Alaskan, Central, South, and Southwest Pacific theaters, they covered the activities of Army ground forces, air forces, service forces, and technical services. It became customary for divisions and regiments, and occasionally for battalions and companies, to appoint an officer as a part-time historian. In addition, the theater or army historical section sent out roving historians to obtain firsthand information.

The theater historian indirectly supervised historical teams attached to army groups, armies, and corps, served as staff adviser to the theater commander on military history, maintained close liaison with his counterparts from other countries and other U.S. services, and sought to ensure the preservation of records. Because of unconditional surrender, German and Japanese as well as U.S. records eventually fell under his care.

Although the Historical Branch had intended to retain control of the overseas historical teams, the theater commander assumed control when they entered his jurisdiction. The branch had a voice in the selection of officer historians, gave them preliminary indoctrination, corresponded with them regularly, and kept a representative in Europe. Yet such influence was not

1. The discussion of the World War II experience is based on the following sources: Bell I. Wiley, "Historical Program of the US Army 1939 to Present," CMH files; Lynn M. Case, "The Military Historian Overseas," *AAUP Bulletin* 24 (Summer 1948):320-33.

uniform. For example, the branch had no liaison with historians in the Southwest Pacific until the war was nearly over; that historical office was located in an allied theater headquarters, not an Army one.

To supplement historical work below theater headquarters, the War Department in April 1944 established numerous information and historical service teams composed of two officers and two enlisted men. Most of the officers were reservists or civilian historians who had been called to active duty or had volunteered. Some were regular and reserve officers for whom no other place could be found. Field army headquarters generally dispatched the teams to subordinate units. Although duties varied from command to command, the teams generally sought to preserve and retire documents, prepare studies, and interview key individuals. Their reports and information were sent to the theater historical sections which had jurisdiction over them.

The teams built upon the interviewing techniques of Lt. Col. S. L. A. Marshall. Assigned to the Historical Branch, Marshall went to the Pacific theater in the fall of 1943 to cover the island campaigns of the 7th Infantry Division. By interviewing groups of battle participants immediately after an engagement, Marshall could reconstruct events as vividly and completely as possible. His accounts of small unit action were noteworthy for their human interest and battlefield realism and his methods were adopted by historical officers in all theaters.

Field historical work in World War II had its problems. Field commanders with full appreciation of the value of history and the difficulties of historical research were rare; many were impatient with the amount of time thorough historical work entailed and used the historian as a tour guide for visiting officials, lecturer, statistician, or expert on local history and mores. Officer historians often had to prove their usefulness to unsympathetic, skeptical commanders, many of whom felt that their S-3s or G-3s could do the job as well. Once the historian had won the confidence of his commander, he had to keep his function clearly separated from the work of unofficial historians who were compiling laudatory unit histories paid for by the subscriptions of unit members.

There were also research problems. Because of security precautions and faulty filing, the historian did not have complete access to important operational documents. Sometimes important records were destroyed or integral file collections dispersed before he could get to them. Deaths, wounds, transfers,

transportation difficulties, and the general pressure of events on important officers made it difficult to conduct interviews. Some of these problems reappeared in Korea and Vietnam.

Korea

Beginning in February 1951, the Army sent eight historical detachments to Korea and assigned them to Eighth Army Special Troops.² At first one detachment attempted to supervise by correspondence the activities of the remaining seven, which were widely scattered in the field. When this arrangement proved too unwieldy, control of the eight detachments was consolidated under the historian at Eighth Army headquarters. Toward the end of the war, the separate detachments were merged into one large detachment at Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, a move which separated the historians from the units fighting the war and burdened them with additional staff duties.

As in World War II, the tasks were enormous. The eight detachments in Korea had to cover the activities of one army, three corps, and six divisions. Some major commands, such as logistics commands, and some corps had staff historians, however, and some divisions appointed part-time historical officers. The Army called up qualified reserve officers to command the historical detachments, but there were not enough of these and others had to be drawn from the personnel pipeline. The Office of the Chief of Military History (OCMH) gave two weeks of orientation to detachment members before they went to Korea.

Although OCMH could not supervise the detachments directly or even establish a uniform method for combat interviews, it could offer professional advice and request written reports. Based on after-action interviews, terrain analysis, and available documents, these reports focused largely on specific small unit actions which the detachments could cover comprehensively. Forwarded to OCMH through intermediate historical offices, the raw reports were intended as reference and source material for the official histories to come. As the war progressed, however, the Eighth Army historian emphasized reviewing and polishing

2. Information on the use of Historical Teams in Korea has been derived from Lt. Col. James H. Ferguson, "The US Army Historical Effort in Vietnam, 1954-1968," 1969, CMH files; Maj. Robert Fechtman, "The Value of Historical Detachments," 1952, CMH files; interview with Mr. Billy C. Mossman, former history detachment commander in Korea, 22 May 1975.

reports as they passed up the chain of command. As a result historians spent more time behind desks and had less opportunity to get to the field.

Vietnam

Because its people served under the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), a joint U.S. command, the Army could assign detachments to Vietnam only after large Army units arrived and Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam (USARV), was formed in 1965.³ Activated in Hawaii, the first history detachment reached the war zone in September. Headquarters in Vietnam initially expected it would need only five additional detachments, but had to request sixteen more in November to cover the rapidly expanding involvement and in September 1966 raised the total to twenty-seven. Ultimately all twenty-seven detachments, over three times more than in Korea, were deployed and assigned to subordinate commands and units. Because the command historian sometimes shifted detachments from unit to unit, a particular unit may have had a detachment assigned to it for only part of the war.

As in earlier wars, it was difficult to find enough officers with satisfactory backgrounds or training. In 1965 only seventeen officers on active duty met the qualification for military historian. But this time the Army sought its historians among officers already in uniform and called no civilians to active duty. Yet the scarcity of professionally qualified historians in the early stages of the war was less serious than it might appear. Since the detachment commanders' mission was to preserve records and interview participants rather than to perform research or write monographs, it was more important for them to have broad experience in the Army and a working knowledge of its mores and procedures than to be certified historians. And as the war progressed, more officers with historical backgrounds came on active duty and, once in uniform, were assigned as detachment commanders. Many of those selected received training at OCMH and an orientation at Army headquarters in Vietnam to overcome gaps in professional backgrounds and prepare them for their new commands.

In Vietnam detachments were assigned to field forces, divisions, separate brigades, and support commands. While the

3. The discussion of the role of Historical detachments in Vietnam is based on Ferguson, "Historical Effort in Vietnam"; DA Pamphlet 870-2, *The Military Historian in the Field*, 1969; interviews with former detachment commanders in Vietnam; and memoranda, reports, journals, and correspondence in CMH files.

USARV historian exercised "technical supervision," his influence on the historical work of the detachments was limited because the unit to which each detachment was assigned wrote the efficiency report of the detachment commander and because detachments were widely dispersed. Responding to complaints of isolation and insufficient historical guidance, the USARV historian in August 1967 raised anew the same question of command and control that had been raised in Korea and proposed centralizing control of the detachments in his office. Rather than assigning them to outlying units and commands, he proposed attaching them temporarily to specific units to perform specific tasks; commanders of host units would not have operational control of the detachments. The Chief of Military History demurred. Because of the rapid pace and scattered action of the war, he believed it was imperative for detachments to be in the field. If they were dispatched from a central headquarters such as USARV, transportation to the scene of action would be a constant problem, and field commanders would be less responsive and cooperative with outsiders from a higher headquarters. For these reasons all detachments continued to be assigned to outlying units until 1970 when some were reassigned to USARV headquarters.

This type of assignment, however, permitted diversion of detachment commanders to other duties. While occasionally assigned to study specific problems, such as the shipping backlog in 1965, they were routinely charged with preparing after-action reports and operational reports, lessons learned (ORLLs). In an attempt to upgrade the historical value of the operational report and supplement the historical information forwarded to higher headquarters, U.S. Army, Pacific, encouraged the USARV historian to strengthen the historical section of the report. This effort met with some success, but the reports still absorbed much of the energy and time of the USARV historian and the detachment commanders and limited their time for purely historical work.

The difficulties the USARV historian had in advising and assisting detachments were multiplied by time and distance from the ultimate users of their work, Army historical offices in Hawaii and Washington. The influence of these offices was limited to messages and periodic visits to Vietnam. The Chief of Military History also established a "pen pal" program in which historians in Washington corresponded with all detachments, offering technical advice and assistance as well as suggesting areas of inquiry, research topics, and names of people to be interviewed.

The field historical program in Vietnam enjoyed a technical advantage over those of earlier wars. The portable tape recorder proved invaluable in individual interviews and in the combat interview program, an integral part of the detachment's mission. Field historians recorded interviews with commanders and action officers on staffs and forwarded the tapes to the Center of Military History for storage and later use as source material for the official histories of the war.

Historical coverage had to be expanded to include the important work of those who advised Vietnamese units or programs. Detachments were not originally assigned to cover the advisory program because it was under the military assistance command, a joint command. Later in the war U.S. Army, Vietnam, assigned one detachment in each of the four corps or regions in South Vietnam to cover the advisory effort. While U.S. pacification advisers submitted periodic reports to the military assistance command, the scattered and constantly moving teams advising Vietnamese Army units found such reporting difficult. In general, advisory records were more complete at higher headquarters such as corps and field force, where staff and command journals were kept, and less complete at lower levels where reports were made informally by phone, by radio, or in person. Advisers at these lower levels could keep few written records because they were constantly on the move and had little access to office facilities.



After the Vietnam War ended, military history detachments continued to make an important contribution to preserving the record of the Army. Of the three detachments on active duty at this time, two are stationed in Europe where they cover the operations of V and VII Corps. The detachment located in the United States and assigned to Forces Command headquarters covered activities at the Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, and Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Pennsylvania, refugee reception centers. Reserve detachments, attached to the division or command with which they would most likely serve on active duty, participate with them each year in field or command exercises for their two-weeks' training. In the event of mobilization, they are scheduled to be called to active duty and deployed quickly.

From its beginnings in World War II, Army and civilian historians have appreciated the field historical program for

preserving historical documents and recording the views and recollections of participants. Although command and control arrangements have frequently allowed the diversion of historical detachments to routine staff duties, they have nevertheless proved invaluable. Without their work the compilation of recent military histories would have been more difficult and, in breadth and depth of coverage, impossible to match.

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